



TRI-VALLEY Current

Information from Tri-Valley Inc.

Serving people over 60, younger people with disabilities, and caregivers

Current Topics

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"Home With You"

Early Winter 2008/2009



*Best Wishes
for a
Happy
Holiday
Season and a
New Year
Filled with
Peace, Love
and Good
Health*

*From
Everyone
at
Tri-Valley*



Working Together — Tri-Valley's PCA Program and Bay Path Students



Mischelle Lach (upper left) poses with some of the Bay Path carpentry students upon the completion of her ramp.

One brisk autumn morning, a group of determined students and their teacher, Dave Martinson, from Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical High School began an important carpentry project at a home in Southbridge. Important, because the ramp they were starting would be key in enabling Mischelle Lach safe access to and from her house.

Six years ago, Mischelle (now 42 years old) was diagnosed with a disabling disease. The impact on Mischelle was severe causing right sided weakness and difficulty standing, ambulating and participating in daily activities. Caring for her two young children became difficult and she had to give up a busy daycare business in her home. She became dependent on a walker to get around inside her home and the few stairs leading up to her front door were a major challenge even with assistance.

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A
message
from
Marilyn

Thousands of households in Central Massachusetts are still without power as they work to dig out from the recent horrific ice storm. The forecasters are now predicting big storms for the end of this week, the beginning of the next and possibly Christmas.

Even though we, in New England, take pride in our ability to cope with the vagaries of the seasons from spring flooding to fall hurricanes and winter blizzards, an ice storm like the one we just experienced reminds us of the need to be disaster ready at all times. Flashlights with fresh batteries, food and water supplies as well as phones that work without power are all critical and basic survival tools in these situations.

I hope that you were spared from injury and damage to your property. If you did experience the worst effects of the storm, I hope that you now have power and are returning to the regular patterns of everyday living.

Please remember to check on your neighbors, especially those that are older or disabled whenever there is a weather related event. Emergency dispatchers in each town can assist with evacuation and shelter information as well as transportation. During a bad storm we make every effort to contact our clients to ensure their safety. Please use the contact information below if you need to reach Tri-Valley.

Wishing you the best of Holidays as well as health, happiness, prosperity and PEACE in 2009,
Marilyn L. Travinski, Executive Director

The *Tri-Valley Current* is a quarterly publication of:

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IN THE COMMUNITY Savers Bank Heat Project

Savers Bank has generously allocated another \$10,000 for its Heat Project to help needy elderly residents of Southbridge, Sturbridge, Charlton, Uxbridge, Auburn and Grafton. The project was started in the late winter of 2008 when Savers Bank recognized a critical need in their communities for fuel assistance. Arrangements were made with Tri-Valley to manage the project by reviewing eligibility and disbursing the fuel assistance money to benefit needy elderly residents.

Funds for heating assistance for the 2008/2009 winter season are immediately available to eligible seniors and will continue until all of the funding has been expended.

Tri-Valley appreciates the generosity of Savers Bank for continuing this important project for seniors. Call Tri-Valley for more information and an application for heating assistance at 1-800-286-6640.

SAFETY TIPS Dealing with Power Outages

We are all well aware that winter storms have the potential to cause power outages. The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) has some tips for dealing with a possible power outage:

- Check flashlights and portable radios to ensure that they are working and you have extra batteries.
- If your water supply could be affected by loss of power, fill your bathtub and spare containers with water. Water in a bathtub should be used for sanitation purposes only. Pouring a pail of water from the tub directly into the bowl can flush a toilet.
- Set your refrigerator and freezer to their coldest settings (remember to reset them back to normal once power is restored). During an outage, do not open the refrigerator unnecessarily. Food can stay cold in a full refrigerator for up to 24 hours, and in a well-packed freezer for 48 hours (24 hours if it is half-packed).

(continued on last page)

(continued from cover story)

Fortunately, Mischelle was eligible for assistance from Tri-Valley's Personal Care Attendant (PCA) program that is designed to help people with chronic illnesses or permanent disabilities who are living in a home environment. The program allows you to hire, train and supervise your own PCA and that was just what Mischelle needed to manage within her home.

While visiting Mischelle at home, Tri-Valley's PCA Case Worker, Nancy Rollins, recognized the need for an outside ramp that would lead to her front doorway. In 2007, Nancy began the process of seeking funds to pay for construction of a ramp. Her efforts were successful and funding for the materials was granted from the Stephen R. Baum Foundation. At the same time, Nancy made arrangements with Bay Path Regional Vocational Technical School to take on the project.



Mischelle is gleeful as she tries out her ramp for the first time flanked by PCA Case Worker Nancy Rollins and Baypath carpentry teacher Dave Martinson.

By the fall of 2008, all of the arrangements were in place and the ramp building project was underway. Teacher Dave Martinson led the group alternating the work between his junior and senior carpentry classes. Dave said one of the challenges they faced was to do the work while maintaining access for Mischelle so she would be able to come and go as needed.

According to Mischelle, "Dave and the students were wonderful. They thought of everything from moving shrubs and other landscaping changes to re-hanging her front door for better access and checking with her schedule to ensure that she would be able to get to appointments as needed."

The project is now complete. For Mischelle, its value is priceless as she now feels safe and moves more freely coming to and from her home. For the Bay Path students it was a learning experience beyond the carpentry skills that will employ them someday. The combined efforts of the Tri-Valley PCA Program and Bay Path Regional Technical School truly made a difference for Mischelle.

Update: Prescription Advantage PROGRAM CHANGES FOR 2009

According to SHINE (Serving Health Information Needs of Elders), budgetary restrictions at both the State and Federal level, are resulting in changes for some Prescription Advantage members.

Effective January 1, 2009, for members in categories S2, S3 and S4, Prescription Advantage will not provide co-pay assistance until members have reached the coverage gap (donut hole) with Medicare. In 2009, the coverage gap is reached when the total retail cost of a member's covered prescription drugs reaches \$2,700. Once the coverage gap is reached, Prescription Advantage co-payment assistance will begin at the same levels as 2008. As a result Prescription Advantage will no longer cover the deductible for members in the S2, S3 and S4 categories. Members affected by these changes will be receiving a letter from Prescription Advantage describing the changes in more detail.

If you need help on any aspect of your health insurance, SHINE offers free counseling at your local Senior Center. You can reach a SHINE volunteer by phone at 1-800-AGE-INFO (1-800-243-4636). Once you get the SHINE answering machine, leave your name and number and a volunteer will call you back as soon as possible.

HEALTHY LIFESTYLE **Healthy Tips for the New Year from the Nutrition Program at Tri-Valley**



The beginning of a new year is a good time to think about resolutions. And a great time to start making better food choices. The experts at the American Dietetic Association have identified the following facts regarding nutrition:

1. Eating right does not have to be complicated. Use www.mypyramid.gov to develop a personalized plan for lifelong health.
2. The best nutrition advice is based on science. Before adopting any changes to your diet, be sure the information is based on scientific fact.
3. Get your food and nutrition facts from the expert, a registered dietician.
4. Balancing physical activity and a healthful diet is your best recipe for managing weight and promoting overall health and fitness.
5. Think nutrient-rich rather than “good” or “bad” foods. The majority of your food choices should be packed with vitamins, minerals, fiber and other nutrients; and lower in calories.
6. Look at the big picture. No single food or meal makes or breaks a healthful diet. Your total diet is the most important focus for healthful eating.
7. Prepare, handle, and store food properly to keep you and your family safe from food-borne illness.
8. Don't fall prey to food myths and misinformation that may harm rather than benefit your health.
9. Read food labels to get nutrition facts that help you to make smart food choices quickly and easily.
10. Find the healthy fats when making food choices. By choosing polyunsaturated or monounsaturated fats, you can keep your saturated fats, trans-fats and cholesterol levels low.
11. Attend a nutrition presentation given by Tri-Valley's Registered Dietician at your local senior center.

Caregiver's Corner

Caregivers often struggle with gift ideas for their parents or other older adults in their lives. As people age, their interests and needs often change. Sometimes the best gifts are the ones that make life more enjoyable and less challenging.

Services

- Arrange for and pre-pay, or perform home maintenance services. Services can range from housekeeping to doing large chores, snow removal, window washing, lawn mowing, etc.
- Check with local hair dressers and barbers to find ones who will provide in-home services or arrange for transportation. You can pre-pay and set up the appointment.
- If there are pets in the home, pre-paid exercising and/or grooming services are appreciated.
- Prepay the electric, phone or cable bill.

Large Button/Print Items

- A large button landline, cordless or cell phone can make calling easier. These phones usually have a lighted display, caller ID, and speed dialing and may have picture buttons with names.
- As eye sight diminishes, a large button TV remote control, large print books, playing cards, puzzle books, a large faced wall clock, along with a lighted magnifying glass can be useful.

Safety

- Night lights inside and out, can be set up to come on automatically when it gets dark.
- An automatic medication dispenser can be prefilled weekly and will remind someone when to take medication.
- A personal emergency response system can save a life. In the event of a fall or medical emergency the button on a pendant or wrist bracelet can be pressed and emergency medical services will be summoned.
- Yearly inspections of the furnace/central air systems, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors can be arranged.

Assistive Devices

- Assistive devices for the bathroom (tub bench, hand held shower, raised toilet seat, grab bars,) a long-handled shoe horn and a reaching device can help maintain independence.

Clothing

- Cardigan sweaters with large buttons, warm robes and shawls, sweat suits with zippers, non-skid shoes and slippers, can make daily dressing and keeping comfortable easier.

Gift Certificates

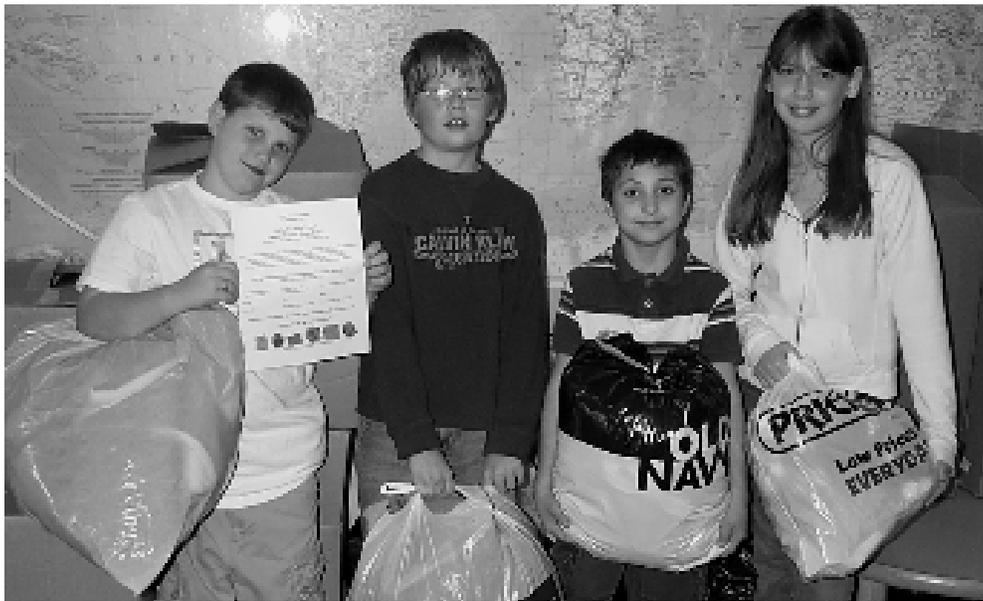
- Certificates for grocery and department stores, restaurants, beauty services and taxi cabs are always appreciated and can be used for "luxury" items.

Recreation

- Greeting cards, stationary, stamps, address labels, notepads and easy grip pens can help people to stay connected.
- DVDs of old favorite TV shows and CDs of most loved music, craft supplies, games, puzzles and a newspaper/magazine subscription can make time alone more enjoyable.
- A scrap book or family photo album, audio/videotape, picture frames and photos can help an older person pass on the gift of priceless memories.

SPOTLIGHT: **Winter Food Project** **Receives Help From Students**

Inspired by the story of Rosa Parks, Cameron Allard and Kayla Gallipeau, 5th Graders at West Street Elementary School in Southbridge, became the motivators of a Food/Winter Coat Drive. After a couple weeks of planning and one week of collecting from boxes placed in each home room, over 200 pounds of food and clothing were donated. The non-perishable food donations were split between HOPE Christian Fellowship and Tri-Valley's Winter Food Project.



Pictured: 5th Grade Students of West Street School: Cameron Allard, Brett Lamica, Devon Palmerino and Kayla Gallipeau amidst boxes and bags of donated food and coats. Linda Lamica, the school's ELT Coordinator assisted the students.

In its 14th year, Tri-Valley's Winter Food Project, is known for helping the neediest and most frail seniors in Tri-Valley's 25-town service area. "It's heart warming to see the young students putting others before themselves," said Marilyn Travinski, Tri-Valley Executive Director. Travinski continued, "We are very pleased to accept their contributions toward our Winter Food Project that provides food for clients during the coldest and most difficult season of the year when they are also struggling to pay heating costs in addition to prescriptions, rent, and other necessities."

About 5,900 non-perishable meals are being packaged and delivered. Elder clients identified with serious needs will receive enough food for the entire month of January and then some. Since the project's inception, it is estimated that over 100,550 meals have been provided. The project's success relies on generous support from area businesses and individuals. Every dollar donated helps procure food through cooperating grocery stores.

This year, the project was enhanced with the addition of an **Emergency Pet Food Fund**. The fund was started by a handful of Tri-Valley employees and their individual donations. "Many people will often feed their pet before themselves so we hope to alleviate some stress this holiday season by providing a week's worth of food," said Jayne Cacciapuoti, Community Support Services Director, who supports the project. Plans to continue the project throughout the year will rely on individual donations from employees as well as community support.



Animal lovers at Tri-Valley and "Puccini" (Yorkshire Terrier) stand amidst the pet food ready to be delivered with the winter food bags to needy clients with pets.

WAYS YOU CAN HELP: Keep the gift of food in mind when planning holiday gifts; a week's worth of groceries for your loved one or neighbor or gift certificates to their local grocery store or favorite restaurant, and please also consider a donation to **Tri-Valley's Winter Food Project or the Emergency Pet Food Fund.**



You can honor a special person in your life through a donation in his or her name. Memorial donations may also be established. Please consider one of the following gift categories.

I wish to make a donation to **TRI-VALLEY'S WINTER FOOD PROJECT**

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$200 \$500 Other _____

I wish to make a donation to the **EMERGENCY PET FOOD FUND**

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$200 \$500 Other _____

This donation is in honor of _____

This donation is in memory of _____

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

TOWN/CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

Please make check payable to TRI-VALLEY, INC. Mail check and form to:
Tri-Valley, 10 Mill Street, Dudley, MA 01571
Donations may also be made on-line at Tri-Valley's website: www.trivalleyinc.org



TRI-VALLEY, INC.
10 Mill Street
Dudley, MA 01571

*Serving people 60 and over,
younger people with disabilities,
and caregivers.*

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Oxford
Southbridge
Spencer
Sturbridge
Sutton
Upton
Uxbridge
Warren
Webster
West Brookfield



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Information from Tri-Valley Inc.

*In this troubled world, it's
refreshing to find someone
who still has the time to be
kind. Someone who still has
the faith to believe that the
more you give, the more you
receive. Someone who's
ready by thought, word, or
deed to reach out a hand, in
the hour of need.*

—Helen Steiner Rice

(SAFETY TIPS continued from page 2)

- If you have medication that requires refrigeration, check with your pharmacist for guidance on proper storage during an extended outage.
- To protect against possible voltage irregularities that can occur when power is restored, you should unplug all sensitive electronic equipment, including TVs, computers, stereo, VCR, microwave oven, cordless telephone, answering machines and garage door opener. (Review the process for manually operating an electric garage door.)
- Be extra cautious when you go outside to inspect for damage after a storm. Downed or hanging electrical wires can be hidden by trees or debris, and could be live. Never attempt to touch or move downed lines, and keep children and pets away from them. Do not touch anything power lines are touching, such as tree branches or fences. Always assume a downed line is a live line.
- Call your utility company to report any outage-related problem.

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